CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, California 95814

(916) 657-2666
FAX (916) 654-9780

June 18, 1997

Mr. Richard Denton
Contra Costa Water District
Post Office Box H2O
Concord, CA 94524

Dear ~~Mr. Denton~~ Richard:

Thank you for your letter dated May 13, 1997. You have raised a series of issues, which I will address in turn.

1. Uncertainties in Impact Assessment and the Linkage Between Assessment Variables and CALFED Program Objectives

I agree that it is not presently possible to fully evaluate all potential impacts such as the effects of organic carbon loading in Delta channels due to inundating Delta islands, and changing tidal flow and flow spilt on fish migration resulting from changed channel configurations. These were not primary subjects of the recent workshop because we believe these limitations are generally understood in the technical community. Our approach will be to make the best evaluations possible within the available time, resources, and technical tools. While there are many answers we do not have, and cannot obtain in the time frame of the programmatic document, we do intend to rely on the best available expertise and methodology in performing these evaluations. The technical capabilities of your agency are particularly valuable in this process, and we are relying extensively on your experts, among others. The "expert panel" and "public forum" approach you suggest for addressing these complex issues has merit and will be considered.

2. Interdependence Between Water Supply Modeling and Water Quality Modeling

I agree that CALFED needs to check water quality benefits of each storage and conveyance alternative using a salinity transport model and should not defer this work. CALFED is moving as expeditiously as feasible by conducting preliminary DWRSIM and DSM runs in parallel, rather than waiting with DSM runs until all the operating assumptions, preprogramming, and alternative storage configurations have been refined for the DWRSIM runs. While this process is underway, DSM runs are being conducted using a range of input hydrologies (a 16-year sequence) to obtain preliminary information about the performance of Delta conveyance alternatives.

As soon as possible, DWRSIM and DSM runs will be linked to provide a comprehensive and consistent evaluation of alternative performance. These linked runs will provide the confirmation of standards compliance or provide guidance required to modify alternatives to achieve such compliance.

3. Reliability

I also agree that assessment of structural changes using one-dimensional hydrodynamic and transport models will be difficult. The problem does not become more tractable with 2-D or 3-D models, because the fundamental issue remains model verification. Since the proposed Delta configurations do not exist, model performance cannot be verified. However, extensive experience with one-dimensional hydrodynamic models based on fundamental principles (rather than statistics) provides a reasonable level of assurance that changes in Delta configurations can be evaluated, if those changes are not too extensive. Any modeling evaluations conducted by stakeholders using models of their choice are welcomed and will be considered along with evaluations prepared by staff.

If you need further information about the efforts undertaken by the CALFED Program regarding modeling, please contact Stein Buer, Assistant Director, at (916) 653-6628. Thank you for your comments.

Sincerely,

Lester A. Snow
Executive Director

G-001610